A NATION BUILDING BUDGET
WHERE’S THE WHO, HOW, WHEN, WHERE & WHY?

“The first budget of the incoming Rudd Government targets infrastructure and foreshadows significant spending – but what will be built, where, by when and who and how will priorities be determined?”, said Neil Savery, National President of the Planning Institute of Australia today.

“Housing affordability and climate change are two other critical areas singled out for new programs and spending. PIA strongly supports this shift in national budget priorities.

“Together with the Major Cities Unit announced last week, we have a stronger commitment at the national level to urban and regional planning and related issues than we have seen in over a decade”, he said.

“National vision and seeing infrastructure as an investment, not as a cost, is critically important for the future of our cities – from a livability and sustainability perspective”, he said.

But PIA wants to see the “who, how, when, where and why?”

Mr Savery said, “We need spending which is outcomes focused, and linked to targets for climate proofing our cities and ensuring their future competitiveness and vibrancy. Spending needs to have clear objectives and a set of national targets and measures agreed to by all three spheres of government.

“An allocation of funds is only the first step. It is critical for the right decisions to be taken in selecting projects to achieve the best return on investment, economically, socially and environmentally.

PIA has proposed Urban Action Plans be developed by our capital city councils, state governments and regional groups outlining what would be done and how this would contribute to key national performance targets agreed to by COAG.

“This would provide for an open, competitive and outcomes focused process. Involving the Major Cities Unit and Infrastructure Australia in a joint decision making process would then go some way to ensuring that we are to achieve integrated results and target the highest priority, highest return ideas.”

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